



**Committee and Date**

Item

**People Overview and Scrutiny**

**22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026**

Public



# Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25

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## 1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The annual report fulfils the statutory requirement under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 for Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships to publish an annual report outlining how safeguarding partners (integrated care board, local authority, and Police) have worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Shropshire.
- 1.2 The report summarises key activity, progress and impact for 2024/25, including governance changes, implementation of national reforms, learning from case reviews, performance trends, and multi-agency improvement work. It also sets out the Partnership's priorities and planned focus for 2025/26 (Appendix A).

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The annual report provides an overview of how safeguarding partners have delivered their statutory responsibilities, strengthened multi-agency arrangements, and improved outcomes for children and families across Shropshire.
- 2.2. The report provides an opportunity to highlight decisions made and actions taken by the Lead Safeguarding Partners (LSPs) and Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs), and provides transparency to children, families, practitioners and elected members.
- 2.3. This year has been the beginning of a transition for the Safeguarding Children Partnership in Shropshire. In July 2024, the Partnership separated from being a joined one with Adult Safeguarding and Community Safety. During 2024/25 the Partnership focused on:
  - Implementing Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 reforms including updating our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA)
  - Strengthening the role of education partners with representation now at all levels of the Partnership structure
  - Improving arrangements for performance and quality assurance, including independent scrutiny
  - Delivering multi-agency learning and improvements as a result of learning from child safeguarding practice reviews (CSPRs)
  - Delivering against our priority areas (neglect; child sexual abuse and exploitation)
  - Shifting focus to early help, prevention and support for children and families
- 2.4. Some of our key achievements and impact include:
  - Establishment of new governance structures (including sub-group structure) and strengthened LSP/DSP arrangements (July 2024 onwards).
  - A comprehensive Independent Case Review Diagnostic, leading to streamlining CSPRs and improved learning and decision-making processes.
  - Delivery of multi-agency case file audits on children looked after aged 0-5, pregnancy, and children who live in families where parental mental health needs, substance misuse and domestic abuse (known as the toxic trio) are present.
  - Updated policies, procedures and training aligned to Working Together 2023.
  - Continued developments to our multi-agency dataset such as the inclusion of health visiting data and development of geographical heat-mapping as well as focussing on the child's journey through the safeguarding system.
  - Held 'Turning the Curve' workshops, with both system leaders and practitioners to create whole system change.
  - Focusing on earlier intervention which has seen a reduction in the number of referrals to the front door and children entering care.

- 2.5. Looking ahead, the Partnership will focus on embedding national reforms (including the guidance published in March 2026 such as Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Families First Partnership Programme, and Children Social Care National Framework), strengthening early help and prevention, improving multi-agency data and quality assurance, and ensuring learning from reviews is fully embedded into practice.
- 2.6. A review of the threshold document is currently underway to ensure alignment with the Families First Partnership Programme. In March 2026, updated guidance was published which includes all safeguarding partnerships to remove the distinction between Targeted Early Help and Child in Need. This is an important shift and aligns with the national direction of travel towards a more seamless, needs led Family Help system. Whilst we have made substantial progress on our updated document, this late change in national guidance means that additional work is required to ensure the revised version is:
- fully aligned with the new expectations
  - practically meaningful for frontline practitioners
  - consistent with our wider partnership approach to Family Help and early intervention
  - clear, accessible, and supported across all agencies
- 2.7. Given the significance of these changes, we believe it is important not to publish the document prematurely. Instead, we are proposing time to allow the partnership to strengthen the updated version and reflect the new guidance comprehensively. We will aim to publish at the beginning of June 2026, in line with national expectations, and will ensure partners are fully involved in shaping the final version. In the meantime, our existing threshold document remains in place, and statutory processes continue unchanged.

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the committee considers and notes the content of the report.
- 3.2. That the committee considers and notes the priorities for 2025/26 and how these will positively impact the lives of children and families in Shropshire.

## Report

## 4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. **Capacity to deliver statutory safeguarding functions.** The Business Unit supports the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Adult Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership. Current capacity is stretched, and resourcing arrangements are under review to ensure statutory duties can be met.
- 4.2. **Implementation of national reforms.** The reforms require significant system change, including strengthened early help, revised thresholds, enhanced scrutiny, and improved data sharing. This presents both risk and opportunity.

Risk	Mitigation
Delivery of statutory safeguarding functions	The SSCP is currently funded through a multi-agency budget detailed within the annual report. Resourcing is currently under review
Implementation of national reforms including Working Together 2026	Delivery plan, governance changes, strengthened LSP/DSP arrangements

## 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The Safeguarding Children Partnership is funded through a multi-agency budget, to which the local authority contributes. Additional contributions (financial or resource in kind) may be required to ensure statutory responsibilities continue to be delivered.

## 6. Background

- 6.1. Under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, safeguarding partners must publish an annual report outlining how they have worked together effectively to safeguard children including: governance and partnership arrangements; learning from child safeguarding practice reviews; multi-agency training; performance and quality assurance; progress against priorities; challenges and future plans.

## 7. Additional Information

- 7.1. [Shropshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements \(MASA\)](#)
- 7.2. [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)

## 8. Conclusions

- 8.1. 2024/25 was a year of significant change and improvement for the Safeguarding Children Partnership with strengthened governance arrangements and enhanced multi-agency collaboration and have continued to drive forward activity and meet statutory duties.

- 8.2. The Partnership now has a clearer partnership structure, stronger scrutiny arrangements, a more robust approach to performance, quality assurance and system learning, and increased focus on early help and prevention.
- 8.3. Priorities for 2025/26 are based on local intelligence, national reforms, and learning from reviews, ensuring the Partnership continues to improve outcomes for children and families.

## Appendices

Appendix A - Shropshire Safeguarding Annual Report 2024/25

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